

LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 22 MARCH 2018

Members Present: Paul Osborn (Chairman) Heather Johnson
Derrick Ashley (Vice Chairman) Chris Kennedy
David Andrews Valerie Metcalfe
Ross Houston Syd Stavrou

In Attendance: Mary Sartin

Officers Present: Shaun Dawson - Chief Executive
Beryl Foster - Director of Corporate Services
Simon Sheldon - Director of Finance & Resources
Stephen Bromberg - Head of Communications
Dan Buck - Head of Sport & Leisure
Jon Carney - Head of Parklands
Shammy Batra - Commercial Solicitor
Marigold Wilberforce - Property Surveyor
Nick Powell - Property Surveyor
Stephen Wilkinson - Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships
Sandra Bertschin - Committee & Members' Services Manager
Luke Blundell - IT Support Technician (Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd)
Mark Rowley - Commercial Development Manager (Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd)
Steve Bragger - Stanstead Marina Manager (Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd)

Also Present: 17 Members of the Public including 8 registered public speakers

Part I

The Chairman announced that the meeting was being recorded and live streamed by the Lee Valley Parking Action Group.

920 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

921 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 be approved and signed.

922 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Eight requests to speak had been received in regard to agenda item 5, Authority Car Park Charges.

Doug Howell (Chairman and Secretary of Fishers Green Angling Consortium):

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- the Consortium comprised 12 angling clubs with 6,500 members;
- car park charges were opposed as anglers already paid to fish and to add further charges was unreasonable;
- most Consortium members lived locally and therefore already paid for the Park through the precept;
- other anglers in the Park would not have to pay car park charges so why should they;
- anglers were usually the first responders to any incidents in the Park, acted as guides for lost walkers, litter picked, reported fly-tips, cared about the environment and provided positive publicity for the Park as demonstrated by recent appearance on the CountryFile TV programme;
- the imposition of car park charges would lead to a reduction in the number of visitors to the Park and alienate the very people the Authority want to use the Park;
- suggestions as to how anglers could be exempted from car park charges had been ignored; and
- where practical designated free parking for anglers was requested.

Karen Sanders:

- she was one of the founders of the Facebook campaign against car park charges;
- the introduction of car park charges would take away her enjoyment of the Park as she visited every day;
- the Park was used by many for their physical and mental wellbeing;
- the company who would be managing car park charging had a poor reputation because of their unscrupulous behaviour;
- residents already paid for the Park through their Council Tax so why did they need to pay yet again?; and
- thousands of people wanted to get involved in the campaign and unless there was some positive action by the Authority further media activity would be pursued.

Peter Colgate:

- he was grateful for the parks and lakes which he visited daily;
- the majority of dog walkers using the Park were old age pensioners and/or blue badge holders who could not afford to pay the car park charges out of their pension;
- the free hour was insufficient for those using walking aids as they needed to rest during their visit; and
- Park users should have been consulted about car park charging so that the problems this has caused could have been avoided.

Martin Codd:

- questioned whether it was fair that there should be any form of parking charge for residents to use the Park;
- the purpose of the Park's facilities was laid down in the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966, as a place for leisure, recreation, sport, games or amusements or any similar activity and a parking charges scheme was the complete opposite of this;
- car park charging weakened enjoyment of the Park as visitors were constantly worrying about time and therefore freedom of choice was undermined;

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- residents already paid for maintenance of the Park through the precept;
- although the Park Act does allow for imposition of car park charges there were 13 other section heads above it and consideration should be given to cutting expenditure before introducing parking charges;
- car park charging directly affected people on fixed incomes;
- the introduction of charging had been poorly thought out and the 24 hour period was a complete shambles;
- car park charging signage was positioned too high and was complex with no exemptions for blue badge holders or adjustments for the disabled;
- the scheme had harmed the Authority's reputation;
- people would modify their behaviour to avoid paying car park charges so the Authority would not receive the income it wanted and local shop parking areas and residential roads would be used instead; and
- the scheme should be abandoned or at least 3 of the options highlighted in the paper should be implemented.

Ross Houston arrived during the above public speech.

Simon Maris (Metropolitan Police Angling Society):

- the Society used 2 lakes in the vicinity of Hooks Marsh car park;
- people trying to avoid paying parking charges at Hooks Marsh car park were using a small parking area off of Fishers Green Lane, owned by the Corporation of London, and consequently anglers were experiencing difficulty parking;
- the report stated that car parks had been excluded from the scheme where the introduction of charges may force visitor cars into close or adjacent car parks, yet this is what has happened at Hooks Marsh car park;
- there had been a lack of consultation with local land owners;
- it was suggested that: and
 - charges at Hooks Marsh car park be scrapped; or
 - anglers be issued with free permits for when the City of London parking area was full; or
 - a free parking permit be issued for angling societies.

Dave Plummer (Epping Forest Green Party):

- whilst recognising the need to raise income to replace reduced precept funding, the physical and mental health implications for the NHS from reduced Park usage would show car park charging to be a false economy;
- it was vitally important for young people to have easy access to nature;
- car park charges would disproportionately affect low wage families;
- public transport was inadequate hence people relied on motor vehicles; and
- support for options 1, 3 and 6 of paragraph 13 of the report.

Michael Gorbald (Hoddesdon Model & Railway Club):

- the Club leased a plot of land which was accessible from the car park and Club members were permitted to use the car park as agreed in the Club lease;

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- 90% of members were over retirement age and visiting the Club was often the only occasion for members living alone to talk to someone else;
- of the 70 Club members normally only 30 attended at any one time;
- great efforts had been undertaken to increase Club membership in order to pay the site rent and if membership numbers dropped because of car parking charges the Club could close;
- as a tenant of the Authority the Club had not been consulted or informed about parking charges; and
- request for Club members to be exempt from car parking charges.

David Elton (Old Mill Retreat Café):

- the Café's regular customers included the elderly, carers and those with special needs who visited on a daily basis for a cup of tea and a chat;
- having to pay car parking charges would make visiting the Café difficult for regular customers;
- the charter for the Lee Valley was to open the land for leisure purposes and car park charges was the opposite of that;
- as the site generates an income for the Authority all year round the car park should be free to use for concessionaires;
- if car park charging is to remain in place, 2 hours free parking is required to enable daily users to walk their dogs and enjoy a rest, with day visitors and commuters being subject to charges; and
- the lack of consultation with concessionaires had quite rightly led to a negative reaction from the public.

TABLED email from a member of the public who had withdrawn from speaking at the meeting

Karen Sanders urged Members to look at the Facebook campaign to see how upset and passionate people were about this issue.

923 AUTHORITY CAR PARK CHARGES

Paper E/553/18

The report was introduced by the Chief Executive, including:

- the Park was known for its high quality award winning open spaces and it needed a sustainable funding model to take this forward;
- car park charges were a common method of raising income;
- in broad terms projected income from car park charges equated to only 10% of the overall cost of parkland maintenance which was a significant cost;
- it had always been intended to review car park charging but this had been brought forward in response to public concern; and
- the options highlighted in the report met some of the concerns expressed.

The Head of Parklands advised:

- car park charging was a linchpin of the Authority's downward levy strategy;

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- a reputable private operator, who was already established operating car parks for Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd at Authority venues, had been appointed to manage charges at the Authority's selected car parks;
- in response to queries raised by public speakers:
 - gate locking continues to be standard practice;
 - a reduction in gate locking would reduce grounds maintenance costs;
 - there has been no reputational damage from the private company's management of car parks for Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd at Authority venues;
 - expenditure had been reviewed and car park charges was an action many local authorities had chosen to adopt; and
 - visitor numbers may reduce in the short term but the Authority needed car park charging to be successful.

The Chairman proposed that options 1 to 3 as outlined in paragraph 13 of the report be approved. This was seconded by Valerie Metcalfe.

Member discussion included:

- the Authority was a caring organisation but also needed to operate in a business-like manner;
- for all public authorities the days of free parking were long gone;
- as with other leisure facilities it was right that regular users should have a discounted season ticket with casual users paying full cost;
- a £50 season ticket equated to less than 14p a day;
- the need for a payment mechanism for low income families to meet the cost of a season ticket should be explored if possible;
- free parking for blue badge holders was a widely accepted principle;
- highlighting the operational difficulties in recording blue badge holder car registrations, as blue badges could be used by the holder in any car;
- proposal that the permit for anglers be extended to the Model & Railway Club and other organisations with similar relationships with the Authority;
- the need for consultation with interested parties; and
- when considering levy reductions in the future it was essential to include consideration of the impact on Park users in having to bear resultant increased fees and charges.

The Chairman proposed options 1 and 3 as outlined in paragraph 13 of the report and to delegate authority to officers to extend option 2 to other connected bodies. He also advised that car park charges would be considered again this year as part of the fees and charges review in the autumn and then would be reviewed annually.

(1) the following car park charging concessions as set out in paragraph 13 of Paper E/533/18 were approved:

- i. general Season Tickets £50 (replacement or change of details £10);**
- ii. Anglers Permits £20 (replacement or change of details £10);**
- iii. delegation to the Head of Parklands to extend £20 permits to other connected bodies; and**
- iv. Blue Badge Holders to park free.**

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The Chairman advised members of the public that their car park charges for attending the meeting would be refunded.

All but 2 members of the public and Shammy Batra left the meeting.
Stephen Wilkinson joined the meeting.

924 REPLACEMENT CRANE AT STANSTEAD MARINA Paper E/551/18

The report was introduced by the Director of Finance & Resources.

A Member queried what options other than a replacement crane had been considered and remarked that the projected cost of a wet dock was too high.

(1) the report was approved.

Mark Rowley and Steve Bragger left the meeting

925 SCRUTINY SOCRECARD – INDICATOR REVIEW Paper E/550/18

The report was introduced by the Head of Sport & Leisure.

A Member requested that in regard to KPI 1, Levy Contribution, sub-indicators of cost per head of population and cost per Band D property per year be included.

(1) changes to the Authority's Key Performance Indicators, Corporate Performance Indicators and Open Space/Service Performance Indicators as set out in Paper S/43/18 attached as Annex A to Paper E/550/18 was approved.

2 members of the public left the meeting.

926 **EXEMPT ITEMS**

THAT based on the principles of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information again on the principles as defined in those sections of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated:

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Section Number
10	Proposed Disposal of Land Adjacent to Balmacara, Admirals Walk, Hoddesdon	3
11	Proposed Disposal of Part of St Paul's Field Site, Nazeing	3
12	Odeon Cinema Lease	3

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927 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF LAND ADJACENT TO BALMACARA, ADMIRALS WALK, HODDESDON Paper E/549/18

The report was introduced by the Director of Corporate Services.

- (1) that the Authority agree based on consideration of Paper E/549/18 that the land identified is no longer required for Park purposes and agree to dispose of the land to the owners of Balmacara on the terms and conditions set out in paragraph 5 of Paper E/549/18;**
- (2) an application be submitted to the Secretary of State for consent to the disposal; and**
- (3) the signing and sealing of all necessary legal documentation was approved.**

928 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF PART OF ST PAUL'S FIELD SITE, NAZEING Paper E/552/18

The report was introduced by the Director of Corporate Services, including proposed amendment to recommendation 3.

- (1) disposal of part of the site at St Paul's Field shown shaded red on Appendix A to Paper E/522/18 on the terms and conditions set out in paragraph 4 of Paper E/522/18;**
- (2) an application be submitted under S21 of the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 to the Secretary of State for consent to the disposal of an interest in land; and**
- (3) that under S22 of the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 consent of the Secretary of State also be sought for the capital receipt to be used to support the capital programme going forward; and**
- (4) the signing and sealing of all necessary legal documentation was approved.**

929 ODEON CINEMA LEASE Paper E/554/18

The report was introduced by the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.

Derrick Ashley left the meeting during the above report introduction.

- (1) the proposed lease terms as outlined in paragraph 9 of Paper E/554/18;**
- (2) the heads of terms as set out in Appendix A to Paper E/554/18; and**
- (3) subject to receiving Secretary of State consent, the signing and sealing of legal documentation in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders was approved.**

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Chairman

Date

The meeting started at 10.33am and ended at 12.05pm.